

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9908

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 12620

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, IR

SUBJECT: FRANCO- IRANIAN RELATIONS

DEPT PASS ABU DHABI

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO QUAI VISIT OF FRENCH DEFENSE MINISTER GALLEY TO IRAN HAS REMOVED MOST OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND SUSPICIONS OF FRENCH POLICY DATING FROM POMPIDOU' S REFUSAL TO ATTEND PERSEPOLIS CELEBRATIONS. PRINCIPAL CONCRETE RESULT OF VISIT IS IRANIAN DECISION TO BUY FRENCH NAVAL PATROL CRAFT. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO QUAI IRAN DESK OFFICER (AUDEBERT), POMPIDOU' S ABSTENTION FROM 1971 PERSEPOLIS FESTIVITIES, COUPLED WITH CRITICAL ARTICLES ABOUT SHAH AND HIS REGIME IN FRENCH PRESS, CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTICULARLY LE MONDE, CREATED CLIMATE OF MISTRUST BETWEEN IRANIANS AND FRENCH. THIS MISTRUST HAD BEEN PARTIALLY LIFTED WITH VISIT OF FRENCH FINANCE MINISTER TO TEHRAN IN EARLY 1972 AND FINALLY DISSIPATED WITH APRIL 29 - MAY 2 VISIT OF DEFENSE MINISTER GALLEY. ALTHOUGH GALLEY FORMALLY INVITED BY IRANIAN WAR MINISTER GENERAL REZA AZIMI, GOF HAD TAKEN INVITATION AS COMING FROM SHAH, AND GALLEY HAD BEEN RECEIVED NOT ONLY BY AZIMI, BUT ALSO BY PRIME MINISTER AND SHAH.

2. FROM DISCUSSIONS IN IRAN, AND FROM BRIEF CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIMIN HOVEYDA, WHO TRANSITTED PARIS APRIL 13, FRENCH HAVE IMPRESSION THAT IRAN BENT ON BECOMING PRINCIPAL GUARDIAN OF SECURITY OF PERSIAN GULF AND WITH THIS GOAL IN MIND, INTENDS TO ACQUIRE MOST MODERN MILITARY EQUIPMENT IT CAN FROM WHATEVER SOURCE PROVIDES HIGHEST QUALITY AT LOWEST PRICE. IN THIS CONNECTION, GALLEY DISCUSSED WITH HIS IRANIAN COUNTERPARTS FRENCH MILITARY COOPERATION AND ARMS SALES PROGRAM.

3. AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON IRANIAN PURCHASE OF BETWEEN FOUR AND SIX FRENCH PATROL BOATS. POSSIBILITY OF FRENCH CONTRIBUTION TO EXPANSION OF EXISTING GUNPOWDER FACTORY ALSO CAME UP AND AUDEBERT THOUGHT THAT IN DUE COURSE AGREEMENT WOULD BE CONCLUDED. ON POSSIBLE FRENCH SUPPLY OF SEA TO SEA MISSILES, ABOUT WHICH PRESS HAD SPECULATED, THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT. PROBLEM, HE SAID, WAS THAT FRENCH EQUIPMENT WHILE OF HIGH QUALITY WAS ALSO OF HIGH PRICE.

4. EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER IRANIANS HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT OTHER FRENCH ARMS DEALS IN GULF, SUCH AS SUPPLY OF MIRAGES TO ABU DHABI. AUDEBERT SAID THAT ISSUE HAD NOT COME UP, THOUGH IRANIANS DID EXPRESS RELATIVELY LOW KEY CONCERN ABOUT ARMS SALES TO IRAQ. FRENCH DEFLECTED THESE CONCERNS BY NOTING THAT SOVIET UNION WAS PREPONDERANT SUPPLIER TO IRAQ AND THAT COMPLAINTS MORE APPROPRIATELY DIRECTED IN THAT DIRECTION.

5. ACCORDING TO AUDEBERT, GALLEY ALSO DISCUSSED COMMERCIAL MATTERS SUCH AS PROMOTION OF FRENCH INVESTMENT AND TRADE. IRANIANS CRITICIZED FRENCH FIRMS FOR THEIR LACK OF DYNAMISM AND FOR UNWILLINGNESS TO ESTABLISH RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES IN TEHRAN. AUDEBERT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CRITICISMS WERE JUSTIFIED AND EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO RECTIFY SITUATION.

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6. COMMENT: FROM PARIS PERSPECTIVE, GALLEY VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE LED TO IMPROVEMENT IN FRANCO- IRANIAN RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH FRANCE HAS ONLY LIMITED DIRECT INTERESTS IN IRAN, IT IS CONCERNED ABOUT OVERALL SECURITY IN GULF. FRANCE IMPORTS ABOUT SEVEN MILLION TONS OF CRUDE (OR ABOUT SIX PER CENT OF TOTAL IMPORTS) FROM IRAN. HOWEVER, IMPORTS FROM ALL COUNTRIES BORDERING ON GULF

ACCOUNT FOR MORE THAN HALF OF FRENCH IMPORTS (65 MILLION TONS
OUT OF TOTAL OF 112 MILLION). THUS SECURITY OF AREA IS OF
SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE TO FRANCE.

7. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT FRENCH SEEK TO IMPROVE RELATIONS
WITH IRAN AND TO GIVE THEM A SECURITY/ MILITARY DIMENSION IF
POSSIBLE. THEY ARE INCLINED TO TAKE IRANIAN ASPIRATION OF LEADERSHIP
IN AREA AT FACE VALUE AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT WHERE POSSIBLE.
FURTHER EFFORTS BY GOF TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH IRAN SHOULD BE
ANTICIPATED, PERHAPS INCLUDING INVITATION TO SHAH TO VISIT PARIS
AT SOME TIME BEFORE END OF POMPIDOU' S MANDATE IN 1976.
IRWIN

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED ABU DHABI.

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